

Testimony of Robert Ortner of Norwalk in support of

HB 6243 AN ACT MAKING A TECHNICAL CHANGE TO THE
STATUTE CONCERNING ADVERTISING BY MASSAGE THERAPISTS

Public Health Committee Public Hearing

Friday, March 15, 2013

Representative Johnson, Senator Gerratana and members of the Public Health Committee, for the record my name is Robert Ortner and I am submitting testimony in favor of H.B. No. 6243 AN ACT MAKING A TECHNICAL CHANGE TO THE STATUTE CONCERNING ADVERTISING BY MASSAGE THERAPISTS.

I offer my comments in support on the bill HB6243 The issue I want to emphasize is that Thai Yoga is NOT massage.

I have pasted in a segment (see below) taken from the mass email the massage lobby AMTA sent out to their members (some of whom support us in our efforts to retain our right to practice Thai Yoga)

The massage lobby's description is one sided in it's inference, and clearly demonstrates a general lack of knowledge and understanding about the practice and process of yoga. Looking only at the popular class form and not considering the vast library of techniques and practices that traditional yoga incorporates. In addition the emerging field of Yoga Therapy, of which I am also a trained practitioner uses a broad pallet of techniques and methods in a hands on, one on one process. There are many movement arts, techniques, and modalities that define the area of wellness in which yoga and thai yoga are a part. I find it disheartening that yoga and by extension thai yoga which are among the oldest healing arts are so under attack. I feel that the AMTA just wants to protect their market share using the state as their enforcer.

Like many of my colleagues, I am highly trained in Yoga, Yoga Therapy, and Thai Yoga. I have studied long and hard and have spent considerable time and money learning my craft. I would welcome the licensing of yoga teachers, I feel they deserve the same recognition any other licensed field enjoys. The fact is that I have certifications and not a license but this is only because the state does not offer it not because I am unqualified to practice yoga and thai yoga.

I have added my rebuttal in bold italics

"The most clear difference between "Thai Yoga" and "Yoga" is passive versus active movement from the participant". ***There are more than a few styles of***

****Hatha Yoga that are completely passive in there application and practice i.e. Yin yoga, Swaroopa yoga, Phenix Rising yoga therapy, among others. These methods allow the practitioner to open and manipulate their own soft tissue using passive stillness as the vehicle. Further more all Hatha Yoga is soft tissue manipulation.***

- "Thai Yoga is done on a mat with the recipient passive and the practitioner performing systematic and scientific manipulation and treatment of the soft tissues of the body, by use of pressure, friction, stroking, percussion, kneading, vibration, range of motion and nonspecific stretching.. It is done one on one, just like any other style of massage therapy (western or eastern styles)" ***Traditionally yoga was done one on one where a master would work with and guide a practitioner in many areas of body, mind, and soul. Yoga is both an art and a science.***
- "Yoga, no matter which style, is done actively by the participant or participants with guidance from the instructor over an entire classroom" ***Again, this is inaccurate There are more than a few styles of Hatha Yoga that are completely passive in there application and practice (see above) Traditionally yoga classes as such did not exist, it was practiced as a life style which has and still does go much deeper than the physical postures that most outsiders consider yoga. "Yoga requires an instructor" No it absolutely does not require an instructor, even in a group setting the Mysore self practice requires no instructor. "but thai yoga requires a practitioner" Phenix Rising as well as Yoga Therapy both require a practitioner that are very hands on "What these instructors are doing is "assisted yoga" and it should be stated as such. It must not be called Thai Yoga" Thai Yoga is assisted Yoga, period. There are many parts of the world that have their unique forms of yoga, yoga and the movement arts and sciences are not exclusive to India alone and I practice many different forms.***
- ***Thai Yoga is the Yoga practice at heart and is NOT massage. The massage industry must not be allowed to dictate what the art and science of yoga can do.***

(*) Hatha yoga is a term used to describe all forms and styles of movement yoga

Thank you

Robert Ortnier

* E-RYT-500 Yoga Teacher certification with Don and Amba Stapleton;

* IYT-Integrative Yoga Therapist training with Joseph Le Page;

* Yoga of the Heart, yoga therapy training with Nischala Joy Devi, the former director of Yoga

for the Dr. Dean Ornish Heart Program for Reversing Heart Disease and co-founder of the

Commonweal Cancer Help Program;

* Thai Yoga certification with Jonas Westring;

* Pilates Mat Certification at the PhysicalMind Institute.

